



THOMAS L. GARTHWAITE, M.D.
Director and Chief Medical Officer

FRED LEAF
Chief Operating Officer

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
313 N. Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 240-8101

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February 19, 2003

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D.
Director and Chief Medical Officer

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Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H.
Director of Public Health and Health Officer

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SUBJECT: INSPECTING PUBLIC SCHOOL RESTROOMS THROUGHOUT LOS ANGELES COUNTY

On February 4, 2003, the Board approved a motion by Supervisor Antonovich, instructing County Counsel and the Director of Health Services to report back to the Board within two weeks regarding establishment of a policy for the inspection of public school restrooms throughout Los Angeles County. County Counsel is issuing a separate legal analysis. This memo describes the elements of a program, if legislative authority is obtained to conduct routine inspections and collect fees.

Departmental staff contacted the California Department of Education and confirmed that there are currently no laws or regulations governing the cleanliness or repair of restroom facilities at public schools in California. Unless the legislation included specific guidelines on restrooms, we would have to develop these as part of the initiation of the program.

Program

If the Department establishes a program to inspect school restrooms, we believe we should also inspect other areas of the school, including the cafeteria, where there are potential health issues. The plan would consist of:

Annual comprehensive inspections of more than 1,500 public schools. These inspections will include restrooms, gyms and locker rooms, classrooms, playgrounds, laboratories and shops; and

- Twice-yearly inspections of all school cafeterias for the application of science-based safe food handling practices.

Cost

Environmental Health staff prepared an estimate of the costs and fee schedule for inspecting schools and cafeterias during fiscal year 2003-2004, based on 1530 schools. The total cost of \$719,000, consists of \$252,000 for school site inspections and \$467,000 for cafeteria inspections. The estimated fee would be \$164 per school for school site inspections (including restrooms) and \$305 for cafeterias. The overall factors utilized to develop the proposed fees include: field time by staff, supervision review, clerical support, mileage, supply costs, and overhead expenses.

These costs and fees should be considered to be the estimated minimum. If the Board chooses to pursue this program, DHS Finance staff will work with the Chief Administrative Officer and the Auditor-Controller to refine these cost and fee estimates, including variations in school size and whether food preparation occurs on site. After the program has been in operation for a year, a review of the actual time spent on these activities would be used to further calibrate the fees.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please let us know.

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c: Chief Administrative Office
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Auditor-Controller